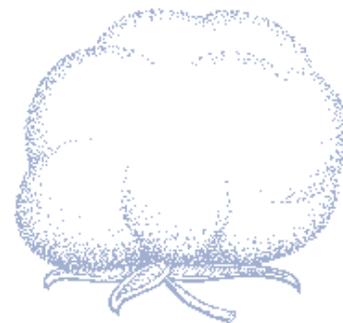


# Progressive Farmer Farm Safety Day Camp

## Be Smart, Be Safe With Farm Chemicals



### Understanding the Worker Protection Standard

#### WPS and The Progressive Farmer Farm Safety Day Camp®

The Cotton Foundation is pleased to be a partner in the Progressive Farmer Farm Safety Day Camp® program and to provide information on the Worker Protection



Standard. The information provided here is taken from a series of documents developed for use by cotton farmers. However, the basic principles apply to all types of agriculture where chemicals are used. The National Cotton Council and The Cotton Foundation are pleased to provide this information for use in the Progressive Farmer Safety Day Camp® program to make the farm a safe place to work and live.

The cotton WPS program was developed and produced by the National Cotton Council in cooperation with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Worker Protection Staff and State Agricultural Officials. Stoneville Pedigreed Seed Company provided generous funds to sponsor this program.



Stoneville Pedigreed Seed Company, now an Emergent Genetics brand, provided generous funding to develop the WPS cotton program for cotton as a Special Project of the Cotton Foundation.



The Syngenta company through funding to the Cotton Foundation to promote stewardship of farm chemicals, is sponsoring printing and distribution of this brochure for the Progressive Farmer Farm Safety Day Camp Program.



#### WPS: Promoting Smart and Safe Use of Chemicals

Whether your family is involved in a livestock operation, operates a farm that hires workers, or simply cultivates a home garden, safety in handling and using farm chemicals (pesticides) is an important consideration for everyone involved.

Although pesticides are beneficial on the farm and thus to society as a whole, safety of using these products should not be taken lightly because they can be dangerous if used carelessly.

The Environmental Protection Agency established the Worker Protection Standard (WPS) to improve safety of agricultural workers. The WPS became fully effective in 1995. The WPS sets training requirements for workers, details decontamination guidelines, provides a location for information posting, specifies the use of personal protective equipment (PPE), requires notification of workers about areas treated with pesticides, defines restricted entry into treated areas, and streamlines pesticide application recordkeeping.

In general, the WPS reinforces efforts to make the farm a safe place to work and live.

The farm owner and the immediate family are exempt from requirements of the WPS because they are generally more informed about farm chemical use, but the basic principles of the WPS should be applied to the owner and his/her family to protect themselves. The principles of Integrated Pest Management, combining biological, cultural, and more traditional methods in the fight against insects, weeds, and disease, are very much a part of today's farming operations. In addition, advances in biotechnology are providing great new opportunities that can reduce the use of pesticides. However, farm chemicals remain important tools to farmers.

An important element of the commitment to responsible environmental management is attention to safety on the farm. When it comes to use of chemical tools, contamination is not an option for farmers, because the land offers livelihood, and often the farm is their place of residence.

#### Principles of the WPS

Designed by the Environmental Protection Agency, the WPS is aimed at reducing the risk of pesticide accidents and injuries among agricultural workers and pesticide handlers. Even though the WPS is designed primarily to protect farm workers and exempts the immediate farm family from the regulations, the principles of safety are for everyone. The following is a listing of the key requirements of the WPS.

##### • Protection during applications

Pesticides should not be applied in such a way that will expose workers or other persons. Workers are to be kept away from the immediate area while pesticides are being applied.

(continued next page)

### • **Restricted-entry intervals**

Restricted-entry intervals (REI) are specified on all agricultural pesticide product labels. This information is a guide to restrict workers from entering a pesticide-treated area during the restricted entry interval, with only narrow exceptions.

### • **Personal protective equipment**

Equipment like gloves, special clothing and masks must be provided and maintained for handlers and early-entry workers.

### • **Notification of workers**

Workers must be notified about treated areas so that they can avoid treated fields or areas.

### • **Decontamination supplies**

Handlers and workers must have an ample supply of water, soap, and towels for routine washing and emergency decontamination.

### • **Emergency assistance**

The WPS requires the employer to provide transportation to a medical care facility if a worker or handler becomes ill. Also, information about the pesticide to which the person may have been exposed is required.

### • **Pesticide safety training and safety posters**

WPS requires training for all workers and chemical handlers. A pesticide safety poster must be displayed as well.

### • **Access to labeling and site-specific information**

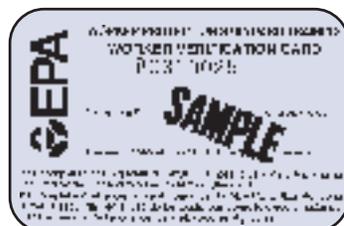
Handlers and farm workers must be informed of pesticide label requirements. A site is to be established for posting pesticide application information and other medical information in a central place on the farm.

The details of these principles will be discussed as part of this publication for the Farm Safety Day Camp®.

## Safety Training

The WPS places a strong emphasis on education of workers about pesticide safety training and verification of pesticide safety training.

- Workers and handlers must be trained before undertaking specific assignments. Different levels of training and timing of the training are required.
- Workers are provided basic pesticide safety information before entering a treated area. Workers are required to complete training no more than five days after beginning employment. All untrained agricultural workers receive the complete WPS pesticide safety training.
- Employees who are “Certified Pesticide Applicators” do not need WPS safety training.



- Handlers are trained before performing any handling task, such as mixing or spraying.
- Early entry workers (those entering a treated area during the REI) train before coming in contact with anything treated with a pesticide.
- Trained employees carry a card to verify training and are retrained every 5 years.

## Who Must Comply and Where is Safety Information Located?

All pesticide products affected by the WPS carry a statement in the “Agricultural Use Requirements” section on the label. This statement informs users that they must comply with all WPS provisions. If you are using a pesticide product with WPS labeling, the WPS requirements must be followed. WPS requirements are not in effect if an agricultural pesticide is used as labeled for a non-agricultural use.

### SAMPLE LABELING

#### AGRICULTURAL USE REQUIREMENTS

Use this product only in accordance with its labeling and with the Worker Protection Standard, 40 CFR part 170. This standard contains requirements for the protection of agricultural workers on farms, forests, nurseries and greenhouses and handlers of agricultural pesticides. It contains requirements for training, decontamination, notification, and emergency assistance. It also contains specific instructions and exceptions pertaining to the statements on this label about personal protective equipment (PPE), notification to workers, and restricted entry interval. The requirements in this box apply to uses of this product that are within areas covered by the Worker Protection Standard.

**Do not enter or allow worker entry into treated areas during the restricted entry interval (REI) of 48 hours. The REI is 72 hours in outdoor areas where average annual rainfall is less than 25 inches a year.**

PPE required for early entry to treated areas that is permitted under the Worker Protection Standard and that involves contact with anything that has been treated, such as plants, soil, or water is:

- coveralls over long-sleeved shirt and long pants
- chemical-resistant gloves, such as barrier laminate or viton
- chemical-resistant footwear plus socks
- protective eyewear
- chemical-resistant headgear

Notify workers of the application by warning them orally and by posting warning signs at entrances to treated areas.

Affected employees include managers or owners of an agricultural establishment, labor contractors, and custom pesticide applicators or independent crop consultants hired by the owner or manager.

Owners of agriculture establishments are not required to provide certain protections to themselves or their immediate families, but they are required to follow the product label and are strongly encouraged to follow the WPS to protect themselves from needless exposure to pesticides.

There are certain requirements, however, that owners and their immediate families must meet.

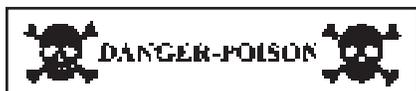
- They must wear personal protective equipment listed on the pesticide label.
- When applying pesticides, they must make certain that they do not contact anyone directly or through drift, that everyone stays out of the treated area, and that label requirements are followed for each pesticide in use.

- They must comply with any restricted entry levels. Family members and workers cannot enter a treated area or contact anything treated with the pesticides to which the interval applies. They can make early entry when there is no pesticide contact and if they are wearing the early entry personal protective equipment, or for short-term, emergency, or specially exempted tasks.

### The More Information the Better

Farming operations are required to display worker safety information at a central posting location that is easy for workers and handlers to locate. That is usually the farm shop, office, equipment building, or a point of assembly where farm employees gather before they begin the day's work. The information required at the central posting location includes:

- A WPS safety poster developed by the EPA or an equivalent.
- Instructions regarding spraying pesticides and/or hand labor tasks, such as placement of irrigation pipe, hoeing, and cultivation.
- Emergency information, including the location of the nearest emergency facility.
- In the case of pesticides, the location and description of the farm area to be treated, the name of the product, the time and date of scheduled application, and restrictions on when workers can reenter the field after an application has been made.
- Employers must insure that workers who come within one-quarter mile of a treated area know all areas on a farm where pesticide applications are taking place and where restricted-entry intervals are in effect. Oral warnings and signs posted at entrances to fields are methods of notification. Each product label will describe methods of notification.



### Clean-up Supplies

Employers must provide a decontamination site where workers and handlers can wash pesticide residue from their hands and bodies. A decontamination site should supply:

- Enough water for routine and emergency whole-body washing and for eye flushing.
- Plenty of soap and single-use (paper) towels.
- A clean change of coveralls for use by each handler (this is not required for workers).

If water is stored in a tank, it must not be used for mixing pesticides unless the tank is so equipped as to prevent pesticides exposure from the water in the tank.

A decontamination site must be within a quarter mile of the employees' work site. If the work site is more than one-fourth mile from the nearest point of vehicular access, the decontamination site may be located at the nearest access point.

### Personal Protective Equipment

Employers must provide handlers with the personal protective equipment (PPE) as specified on the pesticide label. They also must provide handlers with a pesticide-free work area for storing personal clothing, and changing into and out of personal protective equipment for each task.

The employer must make sure that reusable equipment is cleaned, inspected, and repaired before each use; PPE that is non-reusable or cannot be cleaned is disposed of properly; and that equipment is washed and stored separately from personal clothing.

A checklist of PPE might include:

- Coveralls
- Gloves
- Protective Eyewear
- Chemical-resistant footwear, headgear, apron, suit
- Respirator

### Keep Those Records

Although not part of the WPS requirements, employers are required to keep records of pesticide use on the farm. Actually this is a good practice as it ties in with the WPS posting requirements. Under the Recordkeeping Rule, pesticide purchases, use, and distribution are tracked through records kept by manufacturers, distributors, and farmers. Federal laws often establish the rules for compliance, but states can follow with their own laws that can require equal or broader compliance in maintaining and/or displaying records for employees.

Pesticide audits are scheduled, allowing for a review of records related to the purchase and use of these products. Maintaining records for two years following the application of certain pesticides is required under the Federal Pesticide Recordkeeping Regulation and some state laws.

In addition to providing necessary information in the event of a medical emergency, pesticide recordkeeping can help in evaluating the effectiveness of a product, improve planning of purchases for the next season, improve crop rotation decisions, and document legal use.

Based on their toxicity, capability of injury to the user or the environment, or for other reasons, pesticide chemicals used in control of weeds, diseases, and insects are classified as restricted use pesticides (RUP) or general use pesticides.

A RUP may have a longer restricted entry level, increased personal protection equipment levels, notification statements, and other more restrictive requirements than found on general use pesticides. Only a certified private or commercial pesticide applicator or person under their direct supervision can use a RUP.

## Suggested Sources for More Information

This brochure is a condensed version that only gives the principal requirements of the WPS. Employers, workers, and trainers are urged to consult other sources of information in order to learn about specifics of WPS compliance. Although WPS is often viewed as a burdensome federal regulation, it is intended to improve the safety of using farm chemicals. Therefore, it is a good farm practice to learn more about farm chemical safety and the WPS. The Progressive Farmer Safety Day Camp® Program is an outstanding opportunity for your family to learn more about the dangers of farm chemicals and ways to make the farm a safe place to work and live.

- WPS information on National Cotton Council Web site located at <http://www.cotton.org/tech/wps.cfm>
- The “How to Comply Manual” published by the EPA
- EPA web site on WPS: <http://www.epa.gov/oppfead1/safety/workers/amendmnt.htm>
- Regional Offices of the EPA
- State Department of Agriculture or State Lead Regulatory Agency
- Pesticide Coordinators with the State Cooperative Extension Service

### A WPS Glossary

***Agricultural Establishment*** ... a farm, forest, nursery, or greenhouse.

***Agricultural Owner*** ... any person who possesses or has interest (fee, leasehold, rental, or other). You are not an owner under the WPS if you lease to someone else and have granted full management authority.

***Pesticide*** ... a product applied to control insects, weeds, or diseases.

***Immediate Family*** ... spouse, children, stepchildren, foster children, parents, stepparents, foster parents, brothers, and sisters. It does not include nieces and nephews.

***Agriculture Worker*** ... anyone employed and involved in the production of a crop on a farm.

***Pesticide Handler*** ... anyone working on a farm who is responsible for mixing, loading, applying, cleaning, flagging, and completing other tasks related to pesticide application.

***Personal Protective Equipment*** ... special protective clothing, known as PPE, like eyewear, gloves, masks, socks, shoes, or coveralls designed to provide protection from exposure to farm chemicals.

***Restricted Entry Interval*** ... the time immediately following a pesticide application when entry into a treated area is restricted. The restricted entry interval (REI) is usually expressed in 12, 24, 48, or 72 hours.

